DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 190 574 SP 016 548

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TITLE Issues Facing Recreation in the Decade of the Eighties.
PUB DATE Apr 80
NOTE 7p.: Paper presented at the Georgia Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (Jekyll Island, GA, April 18, 1980).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Agency Role: Certification: Change Agents: *College Role: Futures (of Society): *Institutional Cooperation: Leisure Time: Physical Education: *Program Development: *Recreational Programs: Teacher Education

ABSTRACT

The following issues facing university recreation programs in the 1980's are discussed: 1) the leadership role of the university in the community, 2) disbursement of available funds, 3) collaboration between the university and community agencies, 4) professionalism in the recreation field, 5) inservice training programs for specific agencies providing recreational services, 6) mandatory certification of recreational professionals, and 7) supervision of practitioners in practicum training. (JD)

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ISSUES FACING RECREATION IN THE DECADE OF THE EIGHTIES

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SP 016 548

A speech prepared and delivered at the Georgia Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation at Jekyll Island, Ga. on April 18, 1980 by Dr. Charles M. Exley, Jr. of Georgia State University.

Thank you very much. I am grateful to be at Jekyll Island to participate in the discussion about recreation issues facing recreation in the 80's. First thing I did in trying to prepare this talk was to look in my file and see if I said anything about what the issues facing recreation in the 70's were going to be, and I had. So I pulled those things out and it was tremendously interesting and we are going to repeat a couple. But I think that in the perspective of the decade of the 80's are a number of things that I think that we ought to look at, which are going to affect us.

MONEY WINDFALL

I think number one is there is no massive windfall of monies that we can expect in the decade of the 80's. This is extremely clear from the way President Carter treated the land and water conservation fund this year. As many of you know, the President is after funding the land and conservation fund at 25-40% and that is going to significantly impair the development and acquisition for recreation in the 1980's in my opinion. I believe that his compulsion, and I don't mean this negatively, to balance the budget is another indication that operational funds are not going to be available in the 80's the way that we have grown to expect them.

ACCEPTANCE OF RECREATION AND LEISURE

I think there will be greater acceptance of the value of leisure and recreation going to come around in the decade of the 80's. I point specifically to the fact the psychiatrists are beginning to recognize the importance of leisure, that rehabilitation specialists are beginning to recognize it, that it is coming more and more the "in" thing in preventative programs in medicine

to include programs in recreation and leisure.

ANCILLARY AGENCIES

I think we can expect more ancillary agencies who are doing recreation. I think that the best example that we can point to is that 18 fulltime church recreation specialists now exist in the area we now call Metropolitan Atlanta. I certainly cannot speak for the entire state, but that is significant. The quasi-public agencies that we have known to expect to be recreation like the YMCA and Boy Scouts will continue to do some sort of minimal job.

CHANGE IN PROVISION OF SERVICES

I think there will be a greater change from direct provision of recreation on the part of public agencies to the facilitation and management phase. And I think that is going to change the role somewhat.

TIE BETWEEN PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND RECREATION

Lastly I think that we can expect a greater realization between recreation and leisure and physical education and physical fitness. OK, now what do universities do about this, what are the issues facing University programs in recreation in the 1980's? (1) First of all we need to look at the fact that we have to stimulate a change in the traditional aspects of leadership. From one which we schedule for communities to one which we work with communities. Our own experience with the programs which we have been associated with in Atlanta is that we spend more time now working with citizen's advisory committees intensely requesting them to help us in planning the more appropriate programs in recreation. That is changing significantly the role of the leader, universities simply must reflect that in Recreation 102 - Leadership.

(2) I think the second thing is lack of money. I think that we have to begin in our administration courses to deal with the fact that we can no longer expect to have the operating funds that we have traditionally experienced. We have got to begin working again with volunteers. Very quickly, I

picked the programs in three Metropolitan counties in Atlanta within the past three years, Cobb, Gwinnett and Dekalb, because I didn't have enough time to get all of them, you see a significant drop in the operating budget which we have known as personnel. This simply means that the personnel that are left in that budget are going to have to look for indigenous leadership in the community, and to different kinds of professional contributions that we have known. Secondly we have to look to fees and charges, paying your way programs which have finally come of age. We in the universities have to train the leaders of the 1980's to use leadership in the way of volunteers.

(3) Collaborations more than cooperation - In the 1970's we said that we can expect that we will need the cooperation of a lot of agencies in our cities. And we have done that. We have working cooperation, good relationships between such agencies as the Housing Authority, the Atlanta Public Library, the public parks and recreation department. I think that the eighties are going to see us in more collaborative efforts. That means that we are going to have to play a key role in that. In my opinion the university is the single agency in a community that is working with all of the agancies and has to take the leadership position in this collaborative effort and facilitating recreation opportunities. I think that as an aside that we are going to have to develop agencies as consortia, for specific purposes of recreation. I'm not so certain but that the 1980's will see us appropriating various parts of our program to nonprofit agencies paid for fees and charges to accomplish certain parts of our system. I think the summary of that is, togetherness is no longer a matter of choice. It is essential.

(4) The fourth thing that universities have to do is to encourage intensive professionalization. This is one of those points that was also on the list of the 70's. I think that when we talked about increasing professionalization in the 70's we were thinking more in terms of attending meetings

like today and encouraging to attend sessions like you are today instead of being out by the pool where most of us would like to be. And we have done that. Our professional association and membership are up all over. I speak only for GRPS and I hope that I don't steal any of Marvin Billups' thunder by telling you that our membership now is around 1500, from about 600-700 which is what it was in 1970. I think our professionals have to re-committ themselves to a quality of life and to an improvement of the techniques in this quality of life. The summary of this point is that you can't move forward by standing still. Universities must play the central leadership role in the intensive increase in professionalization.

(5) Fifth point, I have only seven, this another one of those that was one on our list of the 70's - training, training and more training. Universities have traditionally sat back and thought that just the simple provision of eight undergraduate courses, six graduate courses and an occasional presentation at a professional meeting is adequate. That is no longer the case, I predict in the decade of the 80's that universities are going to be more intensively compelled to do in-service training programs for specific agencies, specific workshops and miniworkshops. Now, let me explain this just a little bit, it's in the last seven years our University has cosponsored the regional forum for Innovative Recreation Programming. Last year we have 427 people registered. This year we have 315. We ask ourself, is it because we are getting worse that we have fewer registrants, and hopefully we think the answer is No. The increase in travel costs, the increase in training costs in training costs in various agencies has prohibited people from traveling a great distance to go to meetings. I think that what we are going to have to do with the regional forum is that we are going to have to take that same forum and go back to various states so that we are closer to the people that need the training. We

will specialize that training to the specialized needs of those people. Now that means that universities are going to have to work more closely together. For instance, Florida State University and Georgia State University are collaborating on our training program in therapeutic recreation. Last year it was held in Tallahassee, this year it is going to be held at Georgia State. I think that is the kind of thing we are going to have to find ourselves doing in the next decade.

(6) Number 6 - support of mandatory certification. It is finally here, we have got to do it. Therapeutic recreators have gone to the Georgia Legislature this year and frankly, embarrassed the rest of us. They have shamed us. They have indicated to the Legislature that if the Legislature will give them mandatory certification, that they will deal responsibly with it. I believe that we in the university have to be the leaders in the forefront on mandatory and vigorous certification. The summary of that is we have everything to lose and nothing to gain by the status quo.

(7) Last and not least, in the decade of the 80's universities must do what the universities do best, and that is training, and not practicum supervision. I think the decade of the 80's is going to show us a more intensive effort among professionals, practitioners and university persons like myself so that the practitioner supervises practicum training more intensively and we at the university do the basic training which is what we are geared up to do. I think the summary of the whole thing is universities must be prepared to fill the gap left by neglectful university professional societies of the 70's and noncommitted practioners of the present. We must still maintain the attitude of partnership and that is what I view as the issue of the 80's. Thank you.